

**TACOMA CITY WATERWAY  
DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT  
FRAMEWORK**

**Draft  
Goals  
Development Concept  
Design Guidelines**

The preparation of this study was financially aided through a grant from the Washington State Department of Ecology with funds obtained from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and appropriated for Section 306 of the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972.

April 7, 1989

**Zimmer Gunsul Frasca Partnership**

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## OVERVIEW

The City Waterway has functioned historically both as an industrial area and as a gateway for cargo and passengers to the City. At one time, the Municipal Dock welcomed passengers of the area's famous 'mosquito fleet' which plied the waters of Puget Sound. The rail facilities were at one time vitally important to serve the warehousing, manufacturing, wholesaling and processing operations. As time has passed many of these uses have relocated to other areas of the City and many buildings along the Waterway are vacant and deteriorating.

During the last fifteen years the City has adopted policies and plans which have encouraged changes in land uses to recreational, commercial and more public needs. This effort began with the City's adoption of the City Waterway Policy Plan in 1974. Marinas, restaurants, park improvements and the construction of portions of the waterfront Promenade have enhanced the public enjoyment of the Waterway. Many industrial uses remain and should be accommodated. The greatest concentration of active industrial uses is along the Wheeler-Osgood Waterway and the northeast portion of the City Waterway.

The Master Program for Shoreline Development in 1976 provided an environmentally based context for shoreline development. The Shoreline Management Ordinance encouraged reuse and redevelopment of the City Waterway (excluding the Wheeler-Osgood Waterway and portions of the Waterway lying north of East 15th Street) for marinas, water-dependent and water-related commercial uses, water-oriented public park and facilities development and compatible industrial and terminal uses.

The City's Greater Central Business District Plan in 1985 addressed many of the issues influencing the City Waterway and recommended plans and policies for its development.

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A study by Parametrix, Inc. in 1988 assessed the constraints on development posed by soil contamination along the City Waterway. Properties at the southern end of the Waterway are particularly problematic due to soil contamination. A study is currently underway by the City to determine the feasibility of constructing a sediment control facility to treat the outfall at the southern end of the Waterway.

A study by Property Councilors and Jones & Jones in 1988 for the Glacier Park Company (a major property owner on the City Waterway) pointed to the need for major public investment on the Waterway. Without enhancements to the image and access, the study found the Waterway unsuited for mixed use development. Current conditions would support only business park development, which is not consistent with the intent of City Waterway development strategy as described in the City's Greater Central Business District Plan.

A report by the City Club of Tacoma in 1988, *Dome to Defiance: Tacoma's Urban Waterfront*, stresses the need for a comprehensive approach to the planning of the waterfront and the development of a vision for the waterfront's future as a true "people place".

The Union Station District Master Plan, by Don Miles Associates in 1989, proposes linkages and a major public open space and maritime museum on the City Waterway east of the Union Station development and park improvements at 15th Street and at the southern end of the Waterway.

## PURPOSE

The purpose of the City Waterway Design and Development Framework is to assist the City in establishing a design and development concept and set forth design guidelines useful in the development of public access/amenities, private development and circulation improvements.

## GOALS

The goals for the development of the City Waterway may be described as follows:

1. Develop Design Theme and Concept for Redevelopment:
  - a. Create an urban waterfront.
  - b. Maintain historic, industrial and maritime character.
  - c. Establish a diversity of uses - marine, recreational, cultural, residential and commercial.
  - d. Incorporate existing industrial uses on east bank.
  - e. Become an activity center.
2. Evaluate and Improve Environmental Conditions:
  - a. Analyze existing land and water conditions.
  - b. Develop a strategy to remove or abate upland and water contamination.
  - c. Eliminate visual blight.
3. Develop Comprehensive Circulation and Parking Plan:
  - a. Improve the connection between City Waterway and central business district.
  - b. Create a new connection between Union Station and City Waterway.
  - c. Resolve or minimize conflicts between railroad and vehicular/pedestrian traffic.

- d. Provide for bicycle and handicap users of City Waterway.
  - e. Investigate a shuttle bus system.
  - f. Create more public parking on both private and public lands.
  - g. Investigate the relocation of the Vashon Island Ferry Terminal from Point Defiance to City Waterway. Explore using the new terminal for a location for the recreated "mosquito fleet" connecting Seattle and Tacoma.
4. Improve and Expand Public Access:
- a. Create a continuous public promenade with intermittent access to water.
  - b. Maintain views to and from City Waterway, particularly to Union Station and central business district.
5. Develop Marinas and Transient Moorage Facilities Along City Waterway:
- a. Maintain maximum public access and views to water.
  - b. Minimize covered boat storage.
  - c. Create additional transient moorage facilities, particularly at public properties.

6. Increase Amount of Park Space and Open Space:
  - a. Acquire additional public property, particularly on west side of Waterway.
  - b. Establish nodes for public use to break up continuous private development.
  - c. Create a mix of hardscape and landscaped green areas.
  - d. Create major attraction across I-705 from Union Station.
7. Establish a Strong Visible Public Presence:
  - a. Public role to lead and support private development.
  - b. Create a development plan.
  - c. Develop a leasing policy.
  - d. Determine the future of the Municipal Dock.
8. Develop a Strategy for Implementation:
  - a. Create broad and coordinated support of all public and private parties.
  - b. Use the design plan to provide direction.

## DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

A major element in the development concept for the City Waterway is the recommendation for public investments. Public investment on the Waterway is necessary to encourage public use and to provide the context to support major private investment. Public investments, such as in parks, cultural facilities, marine, bus or rail transportation facilities, public office uses, public works projects (district heating, sediment control, street improvements promenade) and state transportation improvements (I-705, I-509), should be designed to support the goals of City Waterway redevelopment. Approached in a coordinated manner, the combination of these public investments may create a new image for the City Waterway.

Other elements of the development concept include the following:

### CITY WATERWAY DEVELOPMENT ZONES

#### *PUBLIC ACTIVITY AREAS*

Public parks and activity areas are recommended at the mouth of the Waterway, at the end of the Waterway and at street ends. Areas of higher public activity and more active parks are recommended at the two major proposed downtown pedestrian connections at Union Station and the 11th Street Bridge.

#### *MIXED USE ZONES*

Mixed use zones are located between public activity areas and access points. These locations benefit from the public investment in the parks activity centers and improved access.

## *INDUSTRIAL ZONES*

The Wheeler-Osgood and portions of the Waterway north of East 15th Street remain industrial until current uses relocate elsewhere.

## **PROMENADE AND ASSOCIATED PUBLIC SPACES**

Although a portion of the Shoreline Trails System, the City Waterway has a district character and identity. The character of much of the Trails System is intended to have a natural theme emphasizing rustic materials and responding to natural forms and shorelines. In contrast, the City Waterway should be more urban as it should function as the downtown waterfront. Street furniture elements should have an urban rather than a rustic, naturalistic character.

Continuity in the design of the promenade should be encouraged within the City Waterway. Special public open spaces and facilities should be developed at selected locations along the Promenade. These open spaces mark areas of special interest. These areas include:

- A major public open space east of Union Station should be created to provide the prime downtown waterfront park and cultural uses as recommended in the Union Station District Master Plan. This open space should be linked to the Union Station District with a pedestrian over-crossing. Consideration should be given to the potential of using this over-crossing for shuttle vehicles in the future as well.

Cultural uses are recommended, such as a maritime museum, to attract the public to the park and to complement cultural uses planned as part of the Union Station property development.



- A major open space in the vicinity of the 11th Street Bridge. The concept recommends the rehabilitation of the Municipal Dock as a maritime transportation terminal for the Vashon Ferry and the "mosquito fleet", or similar major public activity generator. The 11th Street Bridge should be refurbished, repainted and decorated with lights to celebrate its landmark status in Tacoma. The pedestrian connection should be enhanced to reflect the historic character of the bridge and to encourage use. If a major public activity generator is completed (such as a terminal), elevator connections may become feasible.
- Southern Park:  
  
The construction of the 21st Street Bridge will effectively define the southern portion of the Waterway as a special place. The sediment control facility, together with park expansion, provides an opportunity to provide a special attraction at the southern terminus. An environmental protection and reclamation educational theme may be used in the park to create a positive image. Public run points should be provided.
- Gateway Parks:  
  
Gateway park spaces should be developed at the mouth of the Waterway. These spaces may include visual landmarks such as "lighthouse towers" or public art. Public view points should be provided.

## DESIGN GUIDELINES

Design guidelines for the City Waterway are important to establish the quality and to achieve continuity along the Waterway.

## OPEN SPACE

Although the shoreline of the Waterway and the urban trail system is linear, both the reinforcement of the linear aspect and the creation of special spaces along the Waterway are objectives.

### *GUIDELINES*

- Design the promenade, roadway and, in the future, transit systems as continuous, unifying components of the City Waterway.
- Select landscape plantings, paving and street furniture which establish a sense of continuity along the City Waterway and assert the individual character of specific open spaces.
- Locate new public access areas to exploit view opportunities of the City Waterway. Frame views through the appropriate placement of landscape plantings.
- Orient parks, plazas and adjacent developments to provide optimum visual and physical contact with the City Waterway.
- Design open spaces to maximize sun exposure, wind protection, noise buffers and to create a sense of security.
- Enrich City Waterway open spaces through the incorporation of an art program and the involvement of artists.

## LANDMARKS, SPECIAL AREAS AND VIEWS

The preservation of views to the Waterway and major landmarks is an important objective of the urban design plan.

## GUIDELINES

- Restore, enhance and protect views of established landmarks.
- Restore and celebrate important structures such as the 11th Street Bridge and the Municipal Dock.
- Preserve and enhance views of the City Waterway and front access areas from intersecting streets.
- Develop viewpoints in open spaces and parks west of the City Waterway which give panoramic views of the Waterway, Mt. Rainier and the Port of Tacoma. Locate these viewpoints so that buildings and street trees frame and strengthen these views rather than interrupt them.
- Ensure that the scale, mass and alignment of new structures which will adjoin the City Waterway are consistent with the character of the waterfront.
- Organize landscaping, and the height and mass of new structures, to protect important views.
- Use graphics and other art program elements to recall the special significance of an area or place. For example, a special cast brass medallion incorporating the words "Tacoma City Waterway" and unique images symbolizing sub-districts of the Waterway might be used to cap the railing supports along the promenade.
- Align street furnishings, lights and poles along the promenade to optimize views of near and distant landmarks (Mt. Rainier, Tacoma Dome, Union Station, etc.).

- Consider the use of colorful plantings along the promenade which draw attention to special features and views at the location of major public open spaces.

## **CIRCULATION AND PARKING**

Providing improved access to enhance the potential of the Waterway for mixed use development is essential. Both pedestrian and vehicular linkages should be provided between downtown and the Waterway.

### **ROADWAYS**

Dock Street and East "D" Street are the principal organizing elements of the Waterway and, as such, an integral consideration in its urban design. Roadway improvements should be designed to improve circulation while reinforcing the roadways as unifying components of the Waterway.

#### **Guidelines**

- Provide safe and efficient vehicular access between activities and places along the Waterway.
- Design roadways for traffic speeds and volumes compatible with pedestrians, joggers and bicyclists.
- Orient main building entrances toward Dock Street or East "D" Street.
- Accommodate parking and loading near the roadway in landscaped areas or in structured parking, consistent with the urban design treatment of the roadway and maximizes pedestrian access to the Promenade.

## PEDESTRIAN WALKS

The Promenade is intended to provide unencumbered access to the Waterway. It should function as an additional linear component visually and physically connecting open spaces and sub-areas. The scale and width of the promenade and connecting walkways should reflect the varying recreational, pedestrian and circulation requirements of the sub-areas in which they are located. These activities differ from area to area, but may include walking, jogging, entering and leaving buildings, outdoor eating, sidewalk vending and resting.

### Guidelines

- Link landside areas with the Promenade and the Waterway through the use of pedestrian walks. To encourage visual connections, these walks should be spaced, where possible, to coincide with landside streets, even when these streets are discontinuous due to topographical changes.
- Design the Promenade to provide visual continuity between sub-areas.
- Provide sufficient Promenade widths to accommodate anticipated activities and numbers of users.
- Pave, furnish and landscape the Promenade using high quality materials consistent with quality of Union Station and the streetscape guidelines for the Union Station District.
- Establish activity zones which accommodate all Promenade activities without conflict or interference (viewing areas, walking and jogging areas, rest areas, etc.).

## *TRANSIT AND FREIGHT WAYS*

Freight circulation on Dock Street and East "D" Street is intended to move goods efficiently without compromising other Waterway activities and users. Future shuttle buses and potential rail uses, such as extension of the proposed Mt. Rainier train to Discovery Park or commuter rail, should be designed to unify sub-districts of the west Waterway.

### **Guidelines**

- Design and landscape transit stops along the Waterway.
- Maximize the use of transit to provide linkages between the Waterway and the Central Business District.
- Maintain clear views of approaching transit vehicles.
- Locate transit stops to maximize convenience to patrons without compromising operational efficiency.
- Minimize the use of Dock Street and East "D" Street for goods movement as industrial uses relocate over time.

## *PARKING AND SERVICE ACCESS*

Parking and loading facilities should be located adjacent to the buildings they serve in such a way that they do not significantly impact the quality of the surrounding environment.

### **Guidelines**

- Locate on-street parking where it will not block views and view corridors.

- Locate driveways to Waterway lots to minimize interference with other Waterway activities.
- Provide service access at the side or rear of development, screened from public access points and the Promenade.

## LANDSCAPE

The City Waterway landscape design should create a setting complementary to the concept of 'an urban roadway in a park'. The landscape approach should utilize the architectural, functional and aesthetic qualities of plant materials to reinforce continuity, emphasize views and landmarks and enhance visual access to the Waterway. At the same time, plant materials should be used to screen less desirable elements and mask invasive noises. Special public open spaces developed along the Waterway should have varying degrees of "park" versus "urban" emphasis. The major open space east of Union Station should be most "urban" and function as the major downtown waterfront park.

## GUIDELINES

- Manipulate the architectural qualities of plantings to define open spaces along the Waterway and draw attention to landmarks, buildings and significant places.
- Establish a street tree program which preserves significant views and view corridors.
- Develop planting programs which visually connect the downtown with the waterfront.
- Create a strong, simple landscape scheme which is suited to the marine environment and the urban waterfront setting.

- Emphasize the uplifting and refreshing characteristics of plants to reinforce pedestrian appeal of the City Waterway.
- Plant trees which can be limbed up clear of views and transportation sightlines.

## MATERIALS AND FURNISHINGS

### *GUIDELINES*

- Consider historic street fixtures which have symbolic associations with Union Station and the Union Station District while reflecting the unique character of the Waterway environments and districts.
- Use quality materials for paving, planting and street furniture. The materials used along the City Waterway should set the standard for neighboring developments.
- Select pavings and furnishings which enhance the sense of continuity between separate but related sub-areas.
- Select and design pavings and street furniture which contribute to the appearance of the City Waterway without requiring extensive maintenance. Incorporate artists in the design of street furnishings and elements whenever possible.

## SIGNAGE AND LIGHTING

The design of signage and lighting can significantly influence the overall appearance of the City Waterway.

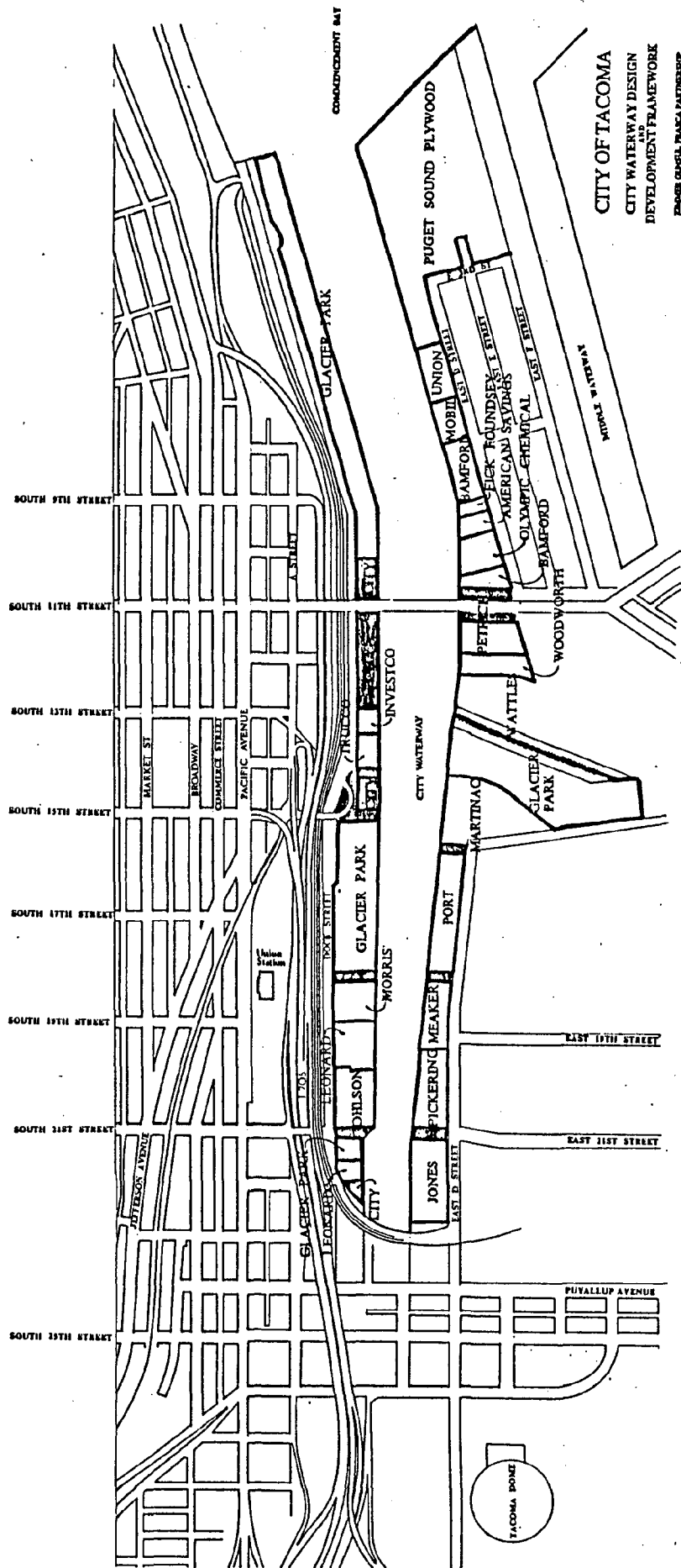
- Develop a uniform system of attractively designed directional signs. Permit only essential signs to avoid unnecessary repetition. Signs should indicate public parking, access and attractions.



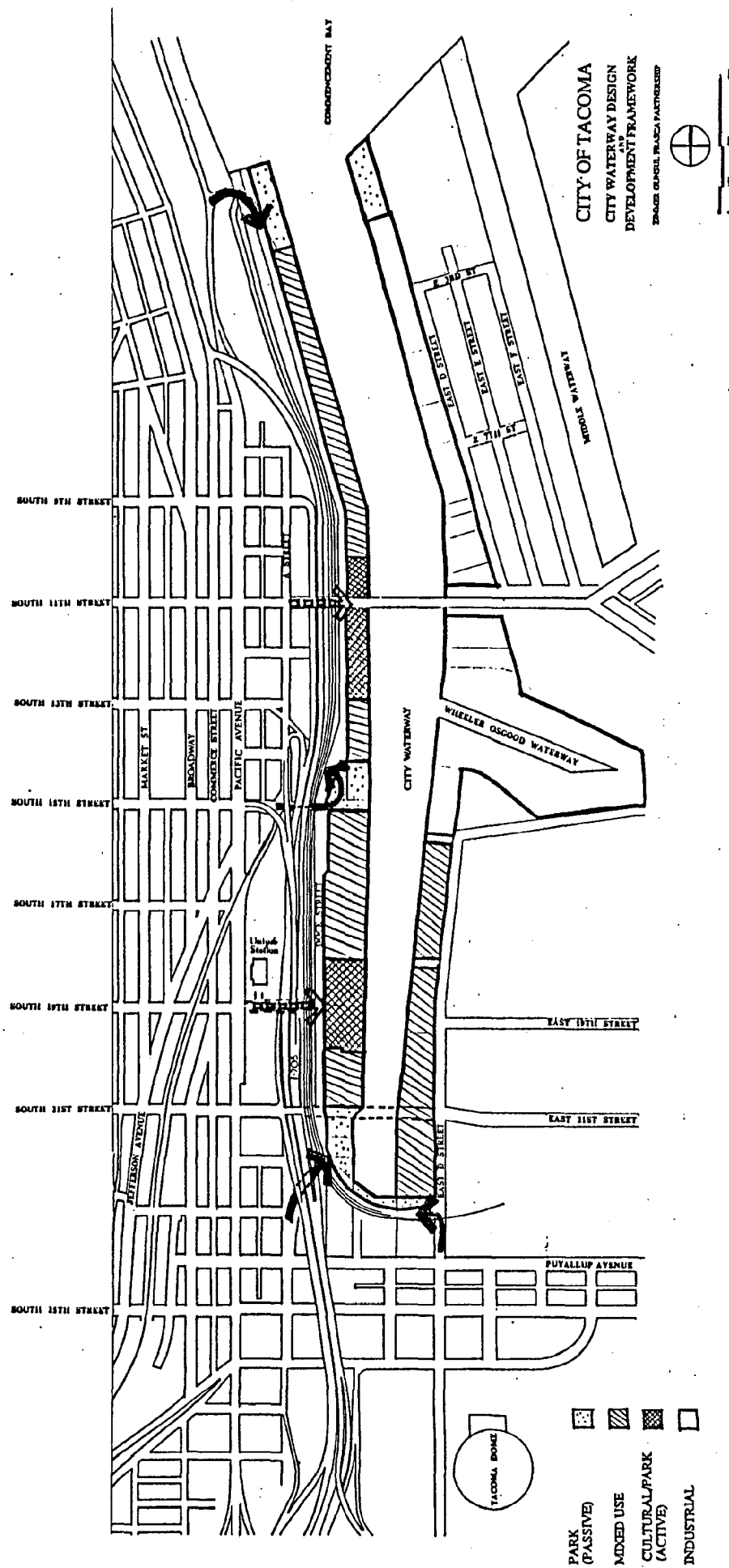
- Assure that public and private signage contributes to the aesthetic of the City Waterway.
- Ensure that signs do not obscure one another or impact important sight lines and views.
- Design walkway lighting which is compatible with vehicular lighting without compromising the different needs of roadway traffic or pedestrians.
- Design lighting on the Promenade to create a ribbon of visible light forms enhancing the continuity and festive quality of the City Waterway.

#### UTILITIES

Where possible, necessary utilities should be located underground to protect the visual integrity of the city Waterway. Future infrastructure requirements should be considered and accommodated in the design and implementation of City Waterway capital improvements so that the underground system of utilities does not restrict landscape plantings or the construction of future projects and developments. The district heating and cooling plan and the sediment control facility at the southern end of the Waterway should be integrated into the urban design plan.

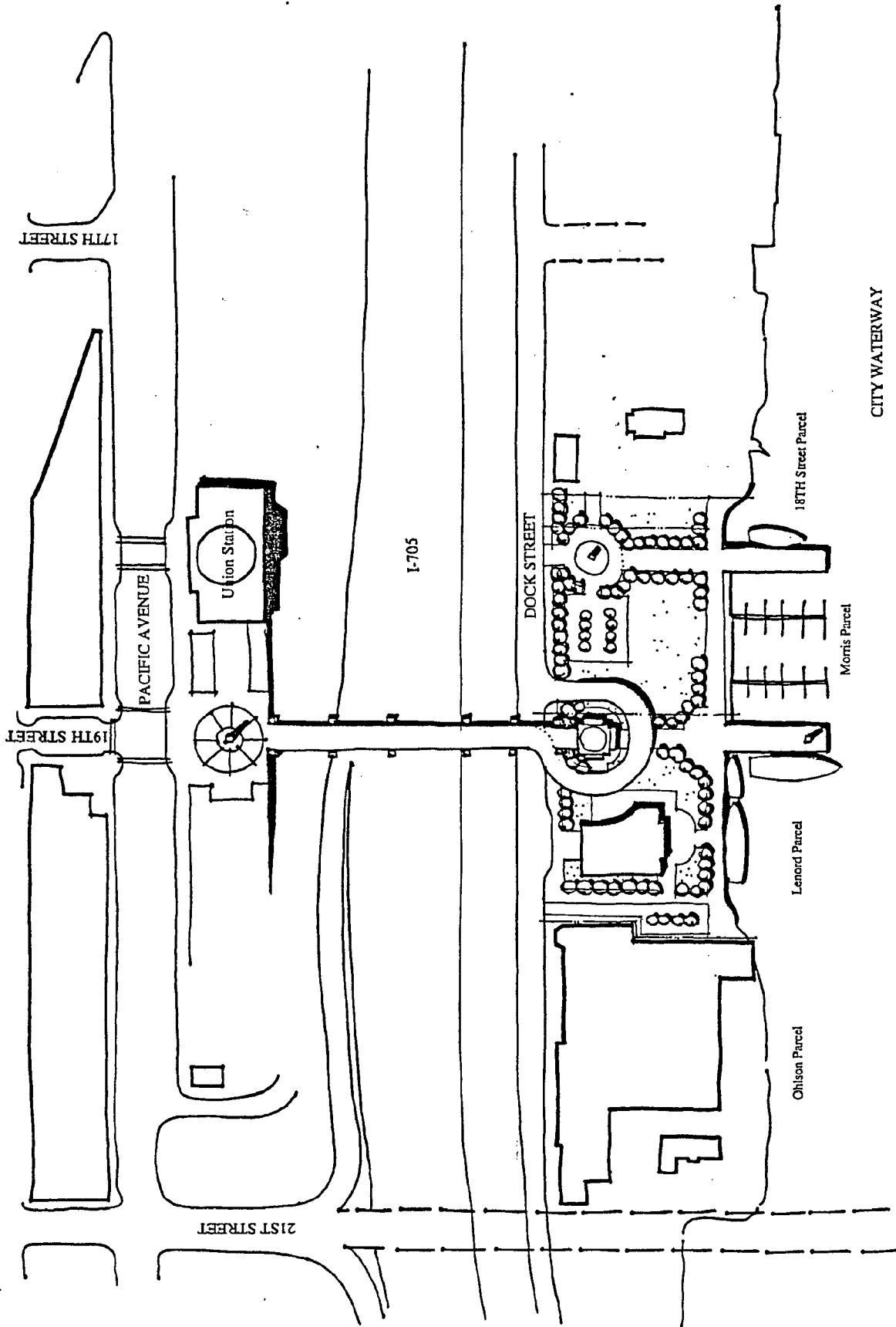


# OWNERSHIP



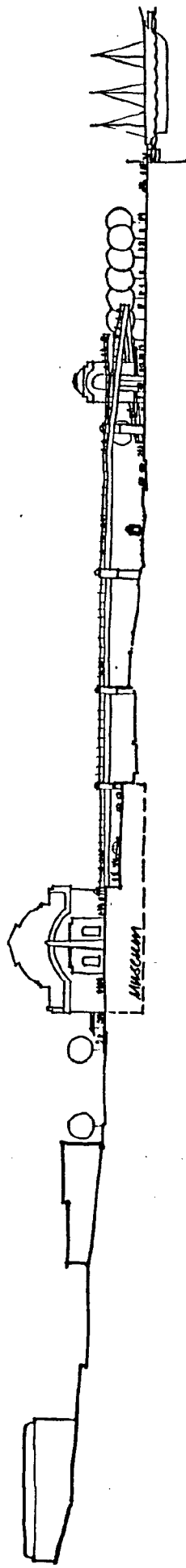
# PROPOSED LAND USES





CITY OF TACOMA  
CITY WATERWAY DESIGN  
AND  
DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK  
ZIMMER GUNSUL FRASCA PARTNERSHIP

A



PACIFIC AVENUE  
MINISTRET

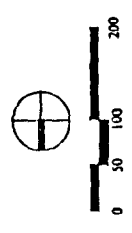
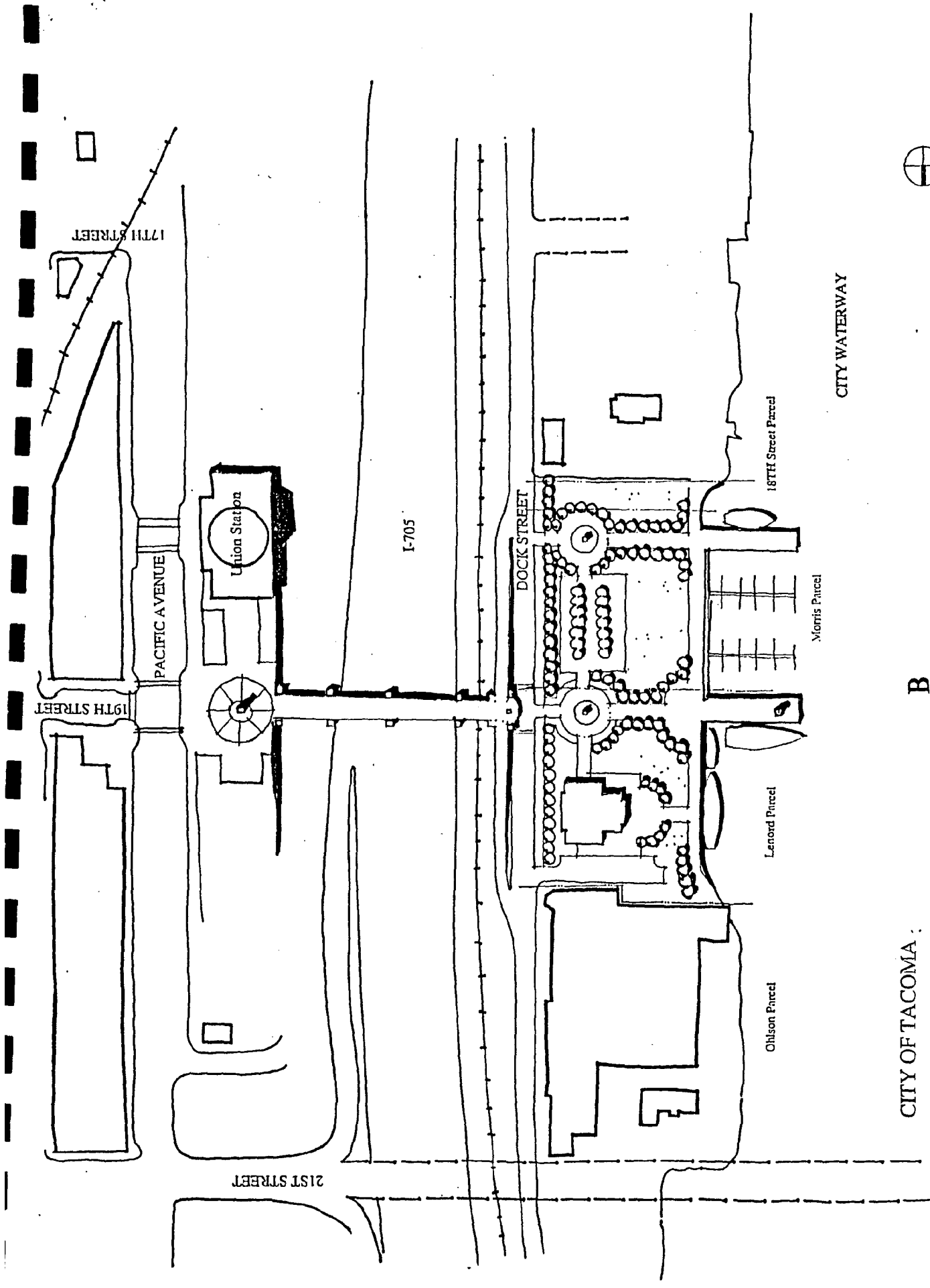
"GARDENS" OF UNION STA.  
CENTURY PARK

BRIDGE EXTENSION  
OF UNION STA.

PARK  
PAVILION  
RESTAURANT

WATER FRONT PARK &  
PROMENADE  
MARITIME MUSEUM

A



CITY OF TACOMA  
CITY WATERWAY DESIGN  
AND  
DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK  
ZIMMER GUNSUL FRASCA PARTNERSHIP

B

CITY WATERWAY

Ohlson Parcel

Lenord Parcel

Morris Parcel

18TH Street Parcel

21ST STREET

DOCK STREET

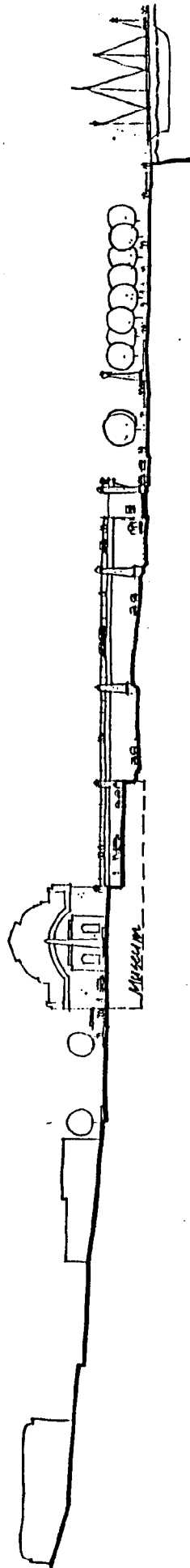
PACIFIC AVENUE

Union Station

19TH STREET

17TH STREET

I-705



PACIFIC AVENUE  
"MUNICIPAL"

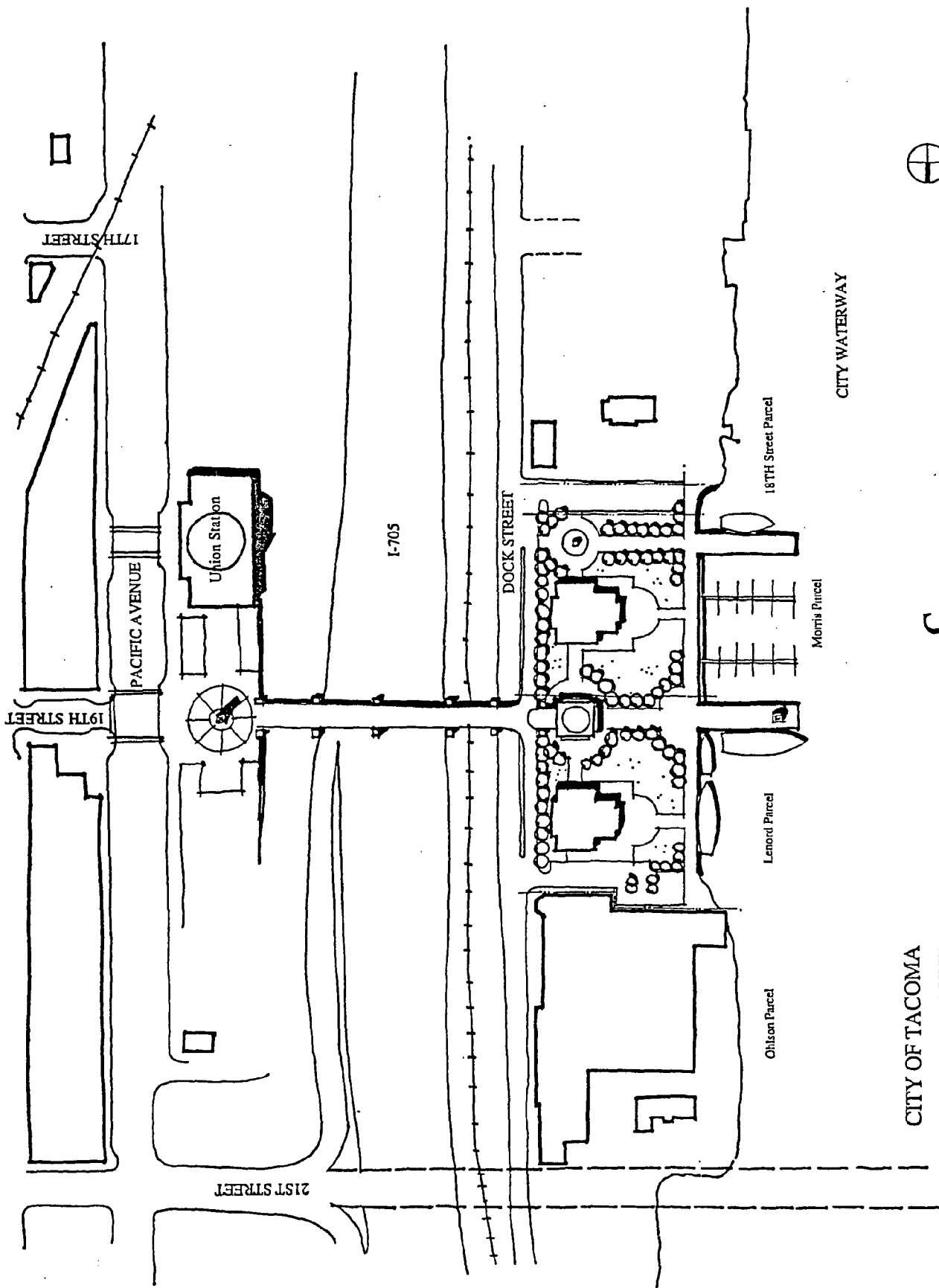
"GROUNDS" OF UNION STA.  
CENTURY PARK

BRIDGE EXTENSION  
OF UNION STA.

VEHICULAR RAMP  
PEDESTRIAN OVERLOOK

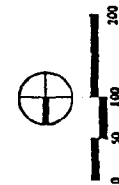
WATER FRONT PARK  
PROMENADE  
MARITIME MUSEUM

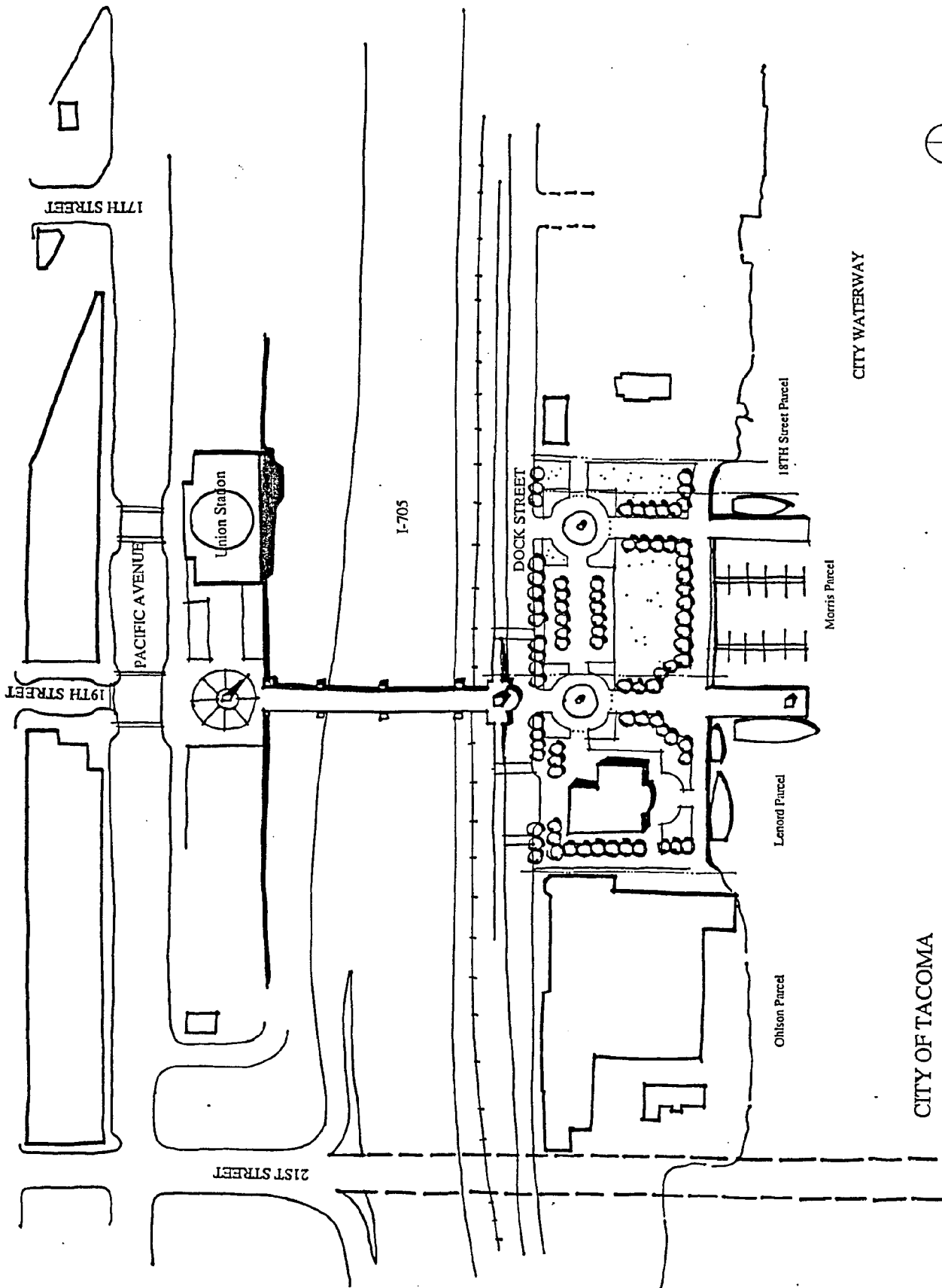




CITY OF TACOMA  
CITY WATERWAY DESIGN  
AND  
DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK  
ZIMMER GUNSUL FRASCA PARTNERSHIP

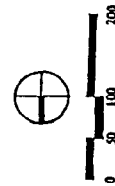
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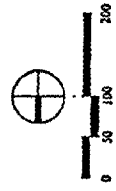
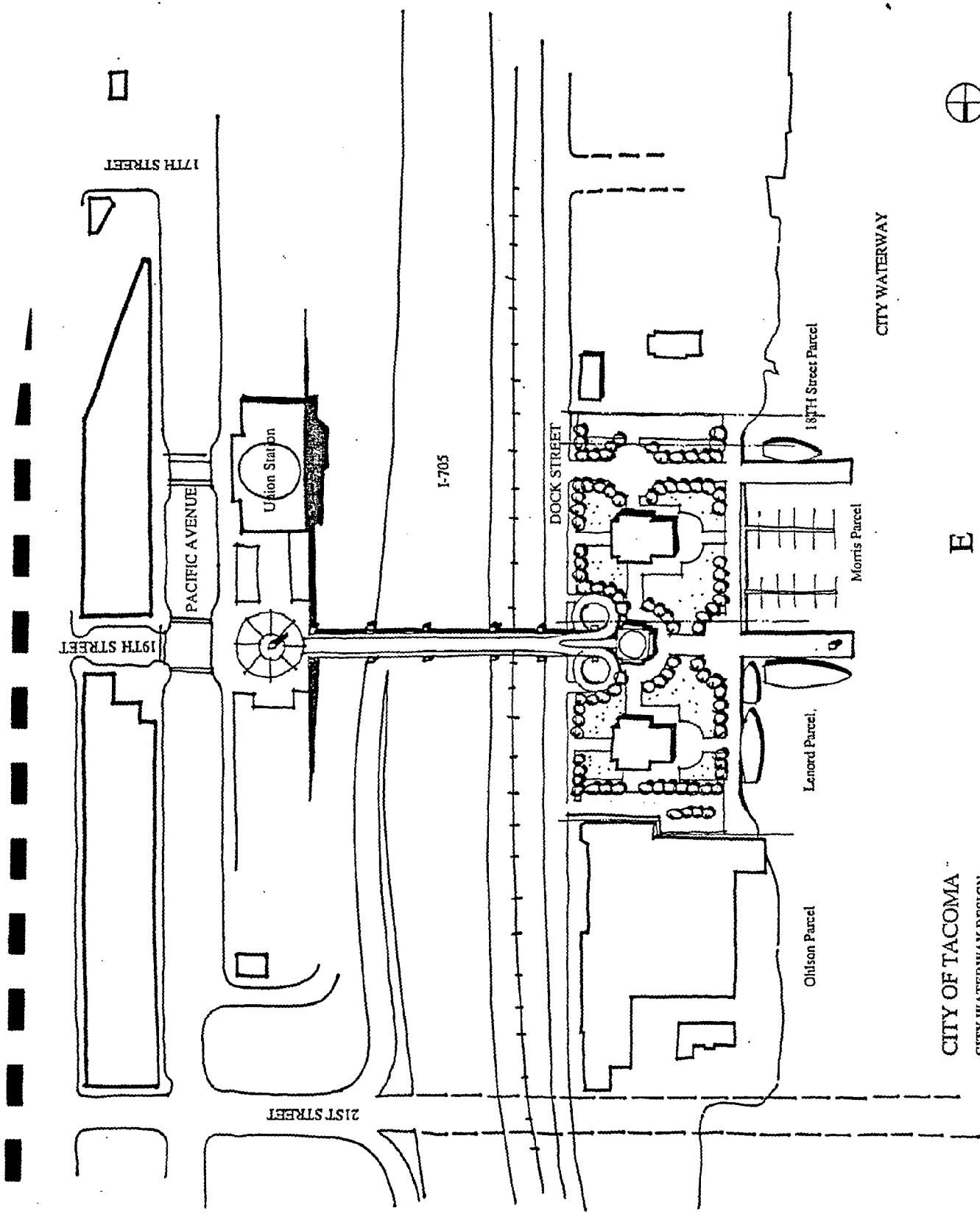




CITY OF TACOMA  
 CITY WATERWAY DESIGN  
 AND  
 DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK  
 ZIMMER GUNSUL FRASCA PARTNERSHIP

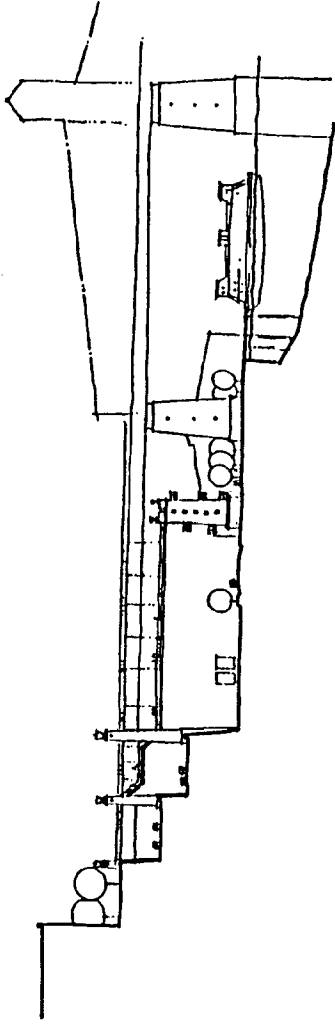
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E

CITY OF TACOMA  
CITY WATERWAY DESIGN  
AND  
DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK  
ZIMMER GUNDEL FRASCA PARTNERSHIP



DOWNTOWN  
TACOMA

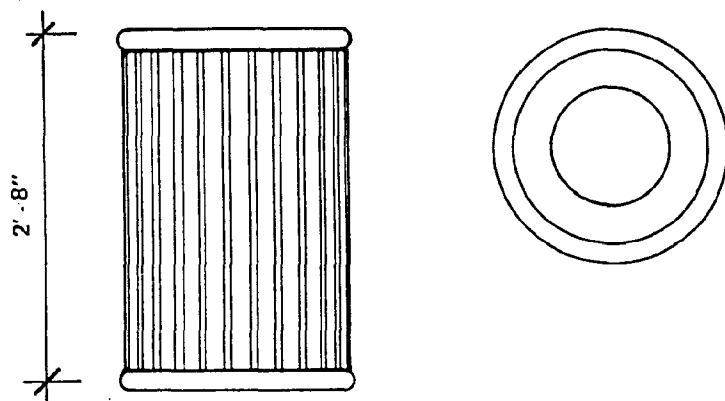
I-705  
"GATEWAY"

HANGING  
WALK

NEW PIER  
PEDESTRIAN WALKOUT

WASHINGTON ISLAND  
FERRY

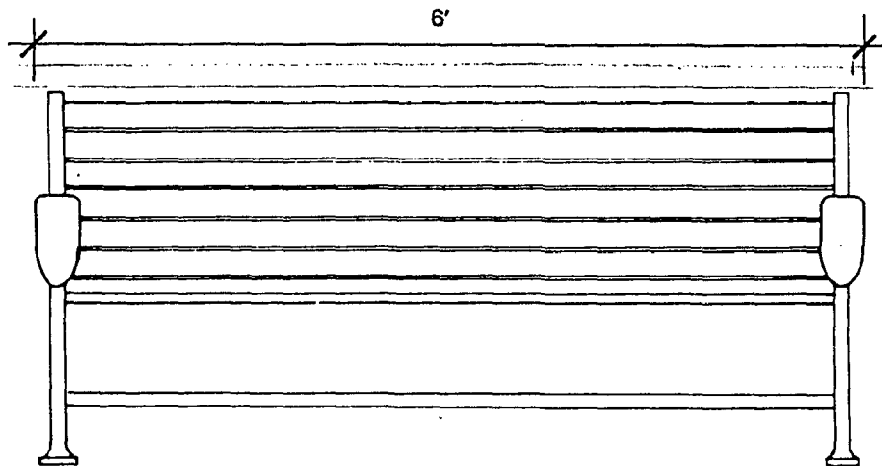
## 11TH STREET BRIDGE PEDESTRIAN CONNECTION



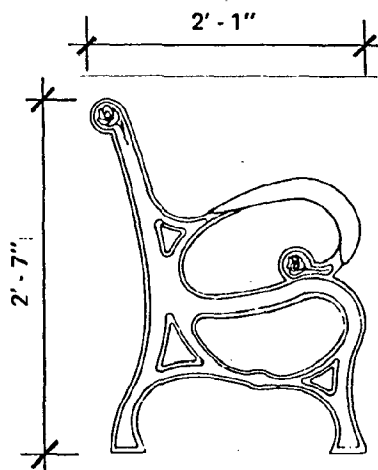
Timberform

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**PROPOSED STREET FURNITURE: LITTER CONTAINERS**



Front elevation



Side elevation

Timberform  
No. 2118-6

## PROPOSED STREET FURNITURE: BENCHES



PROMENADE RAIL POST CAP MEDALLION

NOAA COASTAL SERVICES CTR LIBRARY



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